

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Kremmling Field Office  
P.O. Box 68  
Kremmling, CO 80459**

## **DOCUMENTATION OF LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE AND NEPA ADEQUACY**

NUMBER: CO-120-07-52-DNA

PROJECT NAME: Middle Park Habitat Improvement Project: Dixie Harrow Treatment

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T3N R81W Sections 12, 13, 14, 23 and  
T3N R80W Sections 21, 22, 27, 28

APPLICANT: BLM

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION: The proposed project would involve using a Dixie Harrow to treat approximately 200 acres of sagebrush (Parcel 1 and Parcel 2, see attached project maps). The harrow would be pulled by a heavy, rubber tired tractor. This method would remove older, more decadent sagebrush plants, increase the productivity of young sagebrush, grasses and forbs, and allow native species to be more competitive with invasive plants. The harrow would be applied in multiple strips ranging from 30-40ft wide, with each strip separated by 50-70ft of vegetation that has not been manipulated.

The project is proposed to enhance habitat for Greater sage-grouse, mule deer, pronghorn and Rocky Mountain elk, all of which inhabit the area during various seasons of the year. In addition, livestock forage would increase due to the expected increase in grass and forb production in the treated areas.

The proposed treatment would occur in the fall of 2007, after sagebrush plants have become brittle and dry. The treated areas would be rested from livestock grazing for one to two successive growing seasons using either electric fence or livestock exclusion within the allotment. The treatment would only occur during dry soil conditions to prevent rutting/soil compaction due to wet soils.

LAND USE PLAN (LUP) CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to the following plan:

Name of Plan: Kremmling Resource Management Plan (RMP), Record of Decision

(ROD)

Date Approved: December 19, 1984; Updated February 1999

The Proposed Action is in conformance with the LUP because it is specifically provided for in the Kremmling RMP/ROD as follows:

-Under *Livestock Grazing and Management (II B-4 level 2 # 6)*, the ROD calls for investing in cost effective range improvements...to implement grazing systems and meet specific objectives of AMPs. The Proposed Action is located in a livestock management priority area and the planned action is compatible with this priority.

-In addition, the Proposed Action is addressed in the ROD in “*Wildlife Habitat Management, Including Threatened and Endangered Species*” (II-5.), which states, “Manage public land habitat to support optimum wildlife population levels as determined by the Colorado Division of Wildlife’s Strategic Plan.”

#### REVIEW OF EXISTING NEPA DOCUMENTS:

The following NEPA documents cover the Proposed Action:

- EA Document CO-018-97-14, describing control of sagebrush through the use of brush beating, 2, 4-D and Tebuthiurion (Spike 20P) on thirteen different areas within Jackson County, Colorado. This EA specifically stated that in the future, additional sagebrush treatments might be added and that such treatments would be subjected to the appropriate level of environmental review and tiered to this document.
- Vegetative Treatment on BLM Lands in 13 Western States EIS and Accompanying ROD and the Colorado ROD (July 23, 1991).
- Range/Wildlife Dixie Harrow Treatments CO-KRFO-01-03-EA, 6/5/01

NEPA Adequacy Criteria	Yes	No
<p>1. Is the Proposed Action substantially the same action and at the site specifically analyzed in an existing document?</p> <p>Explanation: Vegetative species composition and condition as well as climatic conditions and topography of the site are similar to sites addressed in the above NEPA documents. Wildlife and livestock grazing objectives for the Proposed Action as well as the objectives in the above NEPA documents are also identical. In addition, the Range/Wildlife Dixie Harrow Treatments listed above are similar projects in an adjacent area with similar physical attributes as the Proposed Action.</p>	X	
<p>2. Was a reasonable range of alternatives to the Proposed Action analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s), and does that range and analysis appropriately consider current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?</p> <p>Explanation: The original NEPA document (CO-018-97-14) analyzed a reasonable range of alternatives. No comments were received at that time. The same conditions currently exist in the project area.</p>	X	
<p>3. Does the information or circumstances upon which the existing NEPA document(s) are based remain valid and germane to the Proposed Action? Is the analysis still valid in light of new studies or resource assessment information?</p> <p>Explanation: There has been no major change in circumstances or new information related to the Proposed Action. The biological needs of big game animals, Greater sage-grouse, and domestic livestock were used in the design of the proposed project and the previously prepared environmental and land use planning documents as well.</p>	X	
<p>4. Does the methodology and analytical approach used in the existing NEPA document(s) continue to be appropriate for the Proposed Action?</p> <p>Explanation: The methodology /analytical approach previously used are appropriate for the Proposed Action.</p>	X	
<p>5. Are the direct and indirect impacts that would result from implementation of the Proposed Action unchanged from those analyzed in the existing NEPA document?</p> <p>Explanation: The direct and indirect impacts of the Proposed Action are not different than those identified in the existing NEPA documents.</p>	X	
<p>6. Are the cumulative impacts that would result from implementation of the Proposed Action unchanged from those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)?</p> <p>Explanation: The Proposed Action would not change the previous analysis of cumulative impacts. Changes would be similar to those discussed in earlier NEPA documents. A small area is proposed for treatment and because of the large areas currently occupied by sagebrush, cumulative impacts would not change.</p>	X	

7. Is the public involvement and interagency review associated with the existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the Proposed Action?	X	
Explanation: Public involvement in the previous environmental analysis provided more than adequate coverage for the Proposed Action. The proposed project has been discussed with and approved by the Middle Park Sage Grouse Working Group, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Middle Park Habitat Partnership Program Committee, and the affected livestock grazing permittees. It has also been listed on the KFO NEPA Register.		

**INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:** Identify those team members conducting or participating in the NEPA analysis and preparation of this work sheet (by name and title).

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility	Date Review Completed
Paula Belcher	Hydrologist	Soil, Water, Air, and Riparian Resources	8/30/07
Bill Wyatt	Archeologist	Cultural and Native American Religious Concerns	Cultural: 9/10/07 Native American Religious Concerns: 9/10/07
Megan McGuire	Wildlife Biologist	T&E	8/6/07
Richard Johnson	Rangeland Mgt Specialist	Invasive, Non-native Species, Vegetation, Range	9/10/07
Joe Stout	P&EC	NEPA Compliance	9/24/07

\* See the EA/EIS for a complete list of the team members participating in the preparation of the original NEPA document.

**REMARKS:**

Cultural Resources: A cultural resource inventory (Report #CR-07-52) was conducted for the two parcels. Parcel #1 located eight new prehistoric sites and located three new prehistoric sites in Parcel 2. Two sites in Parcel #1, sites 5GA3739 and 5GA3743 are determined to be eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and would be avoided. It is recommended that the Field Office Archaeologist, prior to any Dixie Harrow work, flag sites 5GA3739 and 5GA3743. During the pre-field inspection with the contractor, the 2 sites (5GA3739 and 5GA3743) in Parcel #1 would be inspected and flagging would be enhanced if needed with the contractor prior to start of work.

In Parcel #2, three new prehistoric sites were located and recorded. The new sites, 5GA3745 to 5GA3747, are determined to be not eligible to the NRHP and therefore avoidance would not be

necessary within Parcel #2. The isolated finds within Parcels #1 and 2 would not need to be avoided.

Native American Religious Concerns: To date none of the five tribes consulted have identified any Traditional Cultural Properties (TCP) of spiritual significance. If during the work, any human remains or cultural artifacts are located, work would stop at that location and the project Field Office Archaeologist would be notified.

Threatened and Endangered Species: There would be no impacts to threatened or endangered species.

Soil/Water/Air: The mapped treatment area is generally on gentle to moderate slopes, with only the northwest boundary approaching steeper slopes. See proposed mitigation below.

MITIGATION:

-To help reduce erosion, no treatment would occur on slopes of 30% or greater.

-The period of livestock exclusion would be based on the area's vegetative response. Fencing should continue until perennial vegetative ground cover is at least equal to surrounding untreated areas. If this does not occur within 2 growing seasons, then seeding would be required.

COMPLIANCE PLAN: The project would be implemented and administered by the Kremmling Field Office, and the Wildlife Biologist would ensure compliance with the proposed treatment plan.

NAME OF PREPARER: Megan McGuire

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Joe Stout

DATE: 9/24/07

ATTACHMENTS:

1). Project maps

## CONCLUSION

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Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the land use plan and that the NEPA documentation previously prepared fully covers the Proposed Action and constitutes BLM's compliance with the requirements of NEPA.

SIGNATURE OF RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: /s/ David Stout

DATE SIGNED: 9/25/07

Note: The signed Conclusion on this worksheet is part of an interim step in the BLM's internal decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision.